

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

SPECIAL INFORMATION

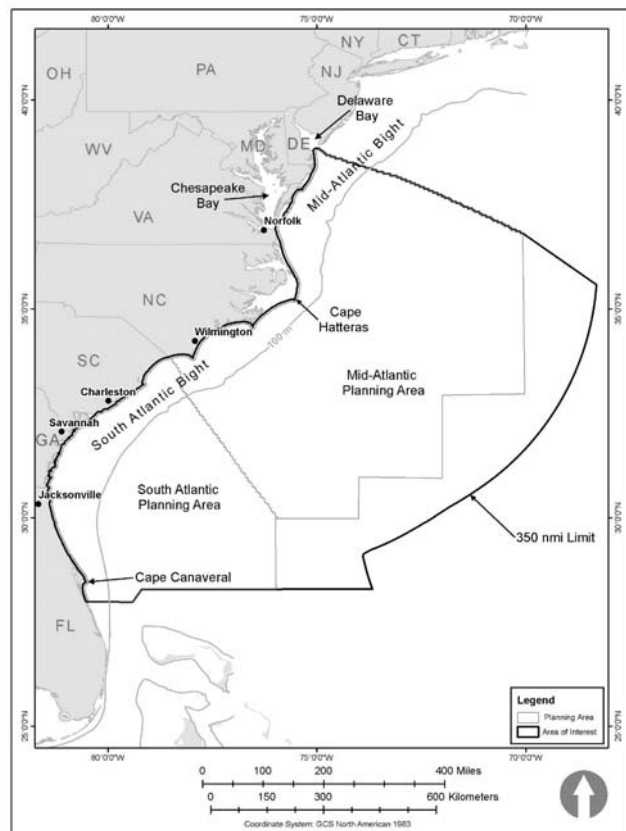
February 2014

**Notice of Availability
Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf
Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities
Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Planning Areas**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announces the availability of the *Atlantic OCS Proposed Geological and Geophysical Activities: Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Planning Areas; Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (Programmatic EIS).

This Programmatic EIS covers the potential significant environmental effects of multiple geological and geophysical (G&G) activities on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in support of the three program areas managed by BOEM: oil and gas; renewable energy; and marine minerals.

The Programmatic EIS was prepared because programmatic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) coverage for permitting or authorizing G&G activities in the OCS waters of the Mid- and South Atlantic Planning Areas currently does not exist. In the Final Programmatic EIS, BOEM presents the baseline conditions and determines whether significant impacts to the Mid- and South Atlantic resources could occur as a result of G&G activities and, where needed, specifies mitigation and monitoring measures to avoid, reduce, or minimize impacts. The Final Programmatic EIS establishes a framework for future NEPA evaluations of site-specific actions for the three program areas managed by BOEM, identifies mitigating measures for programmatic use, and identifies BOEM's Preferred Alternative. Additional NEPA evaluation would be necessary prior to the issuance of any permit or authorization to conduct G&G activities in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS.



BOEM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Programmatic EIS for the proposed action in the *Federal Register* on January 21, 2009 (74 FR 3636). The comment period on the initial NOI closed on March 23, 2009; however, BOEM did not move forward on the Programmatic EIS at that time. On April 2, 2010, a *Federal Register* notice was published announcing the reopening of the public comment period for the Programmatic EIS and listing the dates, times, and locations of public scoping meetings (75 FR 16830). The public comment period closed on May 17, 2010. A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft Programmatic EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30, 2012 (77 FR 19321), opening a 60-day comment period originally scheduled to close on

May 30, 2012. The comment period for the Draft Programmatic EIS was extended for an additional 30 days on June 4, 2012 (77 FR 32995) until July 2, 2012. The comment period includes the additional 4 days between the initial closing period until the reopening was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4, 2012, resulting in a total of 94 days for the comment period.

BOEM will be printing and distributing a very limited number of paper copies. In keeping with the Department of the Interior's mission of the protection of natural resources and to limit costs while ensuring the availability of the document to the public, BOEM will primarily distribute digital copies of the Final Programmatic EIS on compact discs. However, if you require a paper copy, BOEM will provide one upon request if copies are still available.

1. You may obtain a copy of the Final Programmatic EIS from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, Attention: Public Information Office (GM 335A), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Room 250, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394 (1-800-200-GULF).
2. You may download or view the Final Programmatic EIS from the project website at <http://www.boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/GOMR/GandG.aspx> or on our EIS website at <http://www.boem.gov/nepaprocess/>.

A *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability of the Final Programmatic EIS will be published on March 7, 2014. The 30-day review period for the Final Programmatic EIS will close on April 7, 2014. Comments may be submitted in one of the following three ways:

1. In written form enclosed in an envelope labeled "Comments on Final Programmatic EIS for G&G Activities in the Mid- and South Atlantic OCS" and mailed (or hand carried) to Mr. Gary D. Goeke, Chief, Environmental Assessment Section, Office of Environment (GM 623E), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394;
2. Electronically to BOEM's email address at ggeis@boem.gov; or
3. Through the regulations.gov web portal: Navigate to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for "Geological and Geophysical Activities in Mid and South Atlantic" (Note: It is important to include the quotation marks in your search terms.) Click on the "Comment Now!" button to the right of the document link. Enter your information and comment, then click "Submit".

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For further information regarding the Programmatic EIS, please visit our project website at <http://www.boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/GOMR/GandG.aspx>.

If you have any questions, please send an email to ggeis@boem.gov.